

Regarding radio ownership, I am most concerned about the trends in small town station ownership. A locally owned radio station is fast becoming a thing of the past. Groups are gobbling up small town stations and moving them into the next biggest town. Groups are gobbling up medium market stations and programming them for the next largest major market town. Take a look at what is happening in Orange, Virginia where the town's only FM station is being moved into a suburb of Richmond under the guise of serving a town without a radio station. The town is a suburb and the station will become a Richmond station. Meanwhile Orange is left with an AM station and one station owner for it and the two closest towns, Culpeper and Louisa. In my area the FCC allowed one owner to purchase his competition. Now there are five stations owned by the same company and no local competition. Ad rates have quadrupled and now the same news, read from the Washington Post, is all the radio news we get. The FCC errs in its way of determining a market. There should be a criteria other than just signal strength. It should be based on what stations serve the local community. The FCC errs by allowing all of these move ins. Take a look at Cuthbert, Georgia. That town's only FM station, which is now being programmed to Columbus, is being moved in closer to Columbus and the power reduced from 25kw to 6 kw. This is being done to give the operator a better signal in Columbus. The small town is losing its only fulltime radio voice and is left with a daytime AM station. What happens if a tornado strikes at night. This is going on in small market after small market. It is crucial that small towns have their own radio stations because they are the only source of daily local news. This is a desperate situation that needs to be rectified.

Dick Myers  
Mechanicsville, MD